

SOCIAL HYSTERIA VERSUS INDIVIDUAL DILEMMA: A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF CHARACTER RELATIONSHIP IN ARTHUR MILLER'S *THE CRUCIBLE*

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Abstract

The present study attempts to examine the relationship of husband, John Proctor, and wife, Elizabeth Proctor, in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (1953) by clarifying how their use of language in communicating with each other reflects the nature and the development of their tensed relationship. Their relationship, though personal, yet it has been influential in setting in motion the disastrous events which upset the whole community of the 1697 Salem, Massachusetts. Speech act theory associated with the work of J. L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1975) is employed to reveal 1) a failure of communication between the two at the beginning of the play due to their troubled marital life, 2) a true rapprochement achieved by them near the end due to their long suffering during the witch hunt and also to Elizabeth's essential honesty and courageous self-awareness. Her heroic integrity forces her husband to face the truth and soon he makes his final noble choice i.e. death with honor over life with shame. The analysis also depends on considering the critical and cultural studies of the play.

Keywords: Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*, Pragmatics, speech act theory

Introduction

The main objective in the study is to apply a pragmatic approach including Austin's speech act theory (1962) and Searle's contributions (1975) to evaluate the character relationship between two leading characters, husband, John Proctor, and wife, Elizabeth Proctor, in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. Exploring dramatic discourse via a pragmatic approach may be significant because it affirms the close relationship between the linguistic study of literature. Newton (1997, p. 94) maintains that language for literature is not "a superfluous back cloth of a social, emotional or poetic

reality which pre-exists it," but it is "literature 's Being, its very world." Dawson (1970, pp. 8-9) also argues that in drama, "the action is the language" since it creates the dramatic world of the play. However, play texts, compared to poems and fictional prose, have in general received relatively little attention from both critics and stylisticians. Part of the problem may lie in the fact that spoken conversation has for many centuries been commonly seen as a debased and unstable form of language, and thus plays were likely to be under valued (Culpeper, 1998).

Austin's theory is mainly concerned with the aspect of language among participants in social interaction and with the context as the center of understanding of language in use. He provides certain felicitous conditions for utterances to be fulfilled so that the meaning of an utterance depends on not only the phonetic, syntactic and lexical patterns of the spoken language patterns, but also on social circumstances. The research is based on dialogue analysis of two major characters in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, husband, John Proctor, and wife, Elizabeth Proctor, whose troubled relationship has been a main cause for the eruption the disastrous hysteria which overtook the community of the 1697 Salem, Massachusetts. The strategies of interpreting the play also consider the literary and critical work specific to the time when the play was written and performed.

Related Studies

The recent developments of the late seventies and eighties of the twentieth century in discourse analysis and pragmatics have provided helpful tools to analyze the meanings of utterances in fictional dialogue. Some research work has recently employed these new linguistic studies to analyze a number of literary works. Such linguistic applications of linguistic theories open new perspectives for applied literary criticism and add invaluable insights into literary works. Some of these applications to plays are demonstrated below in chronological order.

One of the most important contributions concerned with the language of plays is the book entitled *Exploring the Language of Drama: From Text to Context*, edited by Jonathan Culpeper, Mike. Short and P. Verdonk. (1998) which compiled a number of distinct research work in the new interdisciplinary field. Among these researches is Cooper's exploration of the implicatures of *The Taming of the Shrew*, based on the the use of the work of the philosopher Paul Grice as an interpretative model to explain how inferences can be drawn from conversation. Cooper demonstrates how linguistic inferences derived from violating or flouting a maxim lead to a particular interpretation. Bennison analyses the development of the character Anderson in Tom Stoppard's play *Professional Foul*, by applying concepts from discourse analysis (including turn-length, turn-taking and topic-shift)

and from pragmatics (including Grice's Co-operative Principle and Politeness). Bennison points out that a pluralistic approach to linguistic analysis is necessary if one is to identify the richness of character.

Some of the more recent research work is Dario's (2001) in which he explores H. P. Grice's (1975) notion of conversation and implicature in the interpretation of meaning literary texts focusing on Ola Rotimi's play, *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. His paper depicts the extent to which dramatic dialogue could become a cooperative endeavor and illustrates the varieties of strategies that constitute a complex language in the communication process.

Sofer (2009) argues that in renaissance plays such as *Doctor Faustus*, conjuring represents a performative speech act that threatens to blur the distinction between theatre and magic and that much of the fascination conjuring held for Elizabethan audiences can be traced to its frightening performative potential.

Reflecting the ontological ambiguity of performance itself, conjuring poises on the knife-edge between representing (*mimesis*) and doing (*kinesis*). The play's power in performance, Sofer maintains, relies on keeping the ontological stakes of black magic deliberately uncertain, something which excited and startled Elizabethan audiences, causing them to see devils that were not literally there.

Rachel King's (2011) analysis of turn-taking in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* focuses on the struggle for power between the two leading characters of the play, Martha and George. They both exploit and violate the turn-taking system in their attempts to attain conversational dominance and power and thereby win the verbal game.

M. T. Desta (2012) discusses character relationships in Wole Soyinka's play, "The Lion and the Jewel" by using speech acts, politeness phenomena, turn-taking and cooperative principles. The findings and conclusion of the study show that applying these linguistic theories to dramatic or fictional conversations help to reveal the psychological states, social worlds and physical contexts of writers and fictional figures.

Kizelbach (2013) examines the theme of false or "mad" jealousy in William Shakespeare's *Othello* and *The Winter's Tale* in pragmatic terms, using the speech act theory, felicity conditions, conceptual metaphor, and face. Pragmatics helps to establish the causes of the characters' tragedy: Othello's false jealousy is conceived by Iago's infelicitous speech acts and develops only because Othello is unable to grasp Iago's real intention in communication. On the other hand, Leontes in his obsession is looking for hidden meanings in things just to prove that he is right; his verbal behavior abounds in examples of self-deceit.

The Crucible: Historical Background and Critical Overview

Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was first performed in January 1953. It was intended to present the writer's view on the rise of McCarthyism during the late forties and early fifties of the twentieth century. The play's events were based on the historical witch hunt trials of Salem, Massachusetts in the late seventeenth century in which twenty people were found guilty of witchcraft and hanged, whereas some others, who had also been accused, saved themselves by confessing to witchcraft and accusing other people. McCarthyism, after the name of U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, came to mean "ruinous accusation without evidence" (Popkin, 1964, p. 139). It had been likened to a witch hunt, hence Miller wrote a play about a real one. Similarities between the the Salem court and the McCarthy hearings that examined and interrogated radicals were clearly found. The play tacitly suggested that embracing leftist thought in America at that time was equivalent to an accusation of witchcraft in earlier times stirring panic and suffering in both cases. Moss (1972) argued that McCarthyism represents for Miller the source of moral and political collapse through the creation of hysteria and paranoia.

During McCarthy's congressional hearings, as in Salem's court, the proper process of justice was overlooked and hysteria prevailed through raving rumors and vengeful lies. Many witnesses found no escape but to deliver dishonest confessions and were forced to falsely accuse their friends and acquaintances to save their careers. As in the miserable instance of Salem, naming others was regarded as an indication of honesty and seriousness. Those who protested against the hearings were charged of collaborating with "the red devil" or communist Russia rather than simply the devil as in Salem. Miller in the introduction of *The Crucible* alludes to the play's contemporary reference and invites comparisons between the two widely separated events. With regard to the victims of the witch hunt of Salem he says: "One can only pity them all, just as we we will be pitied someday" (p. 22).

Miller in his notes to the play indicates that the witch hunt erupted when the repressions of order of the Salem theocracy were heavier than seemed necessary by the dangers against which the order was organized. It was a vicious expression of the terror which set in among all classes when the balance between the authority of the state and individual freedom began to turn toward greater individual freedom. The action takes place in 1692, at a time when people were living in a strictly unified society based on the puritan principles. Discipline and obedience were the primary rules and society believed that unity formed the best protection against both hostile nature and the Indian enemy. Such an unbendingly rigid society implies that any form of individuality will be considered rebellious or dangerous and

generates doubts and fears among its members, that is why Miller refers to the strong propensity to mind other people's business. Bonnet (1982) observes that we have therefore a primarily explosive situation where unity imposed by a theocratic authority both ensures and jeopardizes the individual safety, thus the slightest violation in its defenses becomes a channel for all individual and hitherto unexpressed passions. The ordinary disagreements among its members such as envy, jealousy, revenge, lust for power and boundary disputes gradually expanded into a wider, extensive quarrel that soon gets out of control under the cover of accusations of witchcraft against the victims – the result being an intensification of the the already inflated authority.

The elements of conflict, however, in such a situation are too large to be defined within the limits of a play. Thus, Miller offered the main character, John Proctor, as a nascent liberal who was victimized by the witch hunt because of his more or less conscious opposition to Puritanism (Walker, 1956). In addition, Proctor is troubled by an intolerable sense of personal guilt due to a love affair prior to the play's events with the maid girl, Abigail Williams, who ultimately accuses his wife of witchcraft. His moral obligation to save his wife from the charge and his pressing need to restore his self-esteem ultimately leads him to be accused and condemned as a witch. Bonnet (1982) stresses the dual structure of the play for it has the content of social hysteria based on the strife between the puritanical authority and the individuals; at the same time it takes the form of the interior psychological guilt-ridden conflict within the hero psyche concluded with his tragic downfall and triumph. It is through identifying with protagonist's moral dilemma that the audience becomes directly involved in the social tragedy that overtook Salem in the late seventeenth century. Steinberg (1972) argues that the play is raised to true tragic status by means of the higher consciousness that Proctor achieves through his ordeal by fire. Moreover, Hogan (1972) maintained that it qualifies as a Greek tragedy because Proctor through overcoming the painful agony and remorse owing to his past unfaithfulness, he achieves social ethics which promote and liberate the community. Huftel (1972) focused on portraying the progress of Proctor's heroism arguing that he rejects conformity and adopts radical opposition to the the beliefs of an irrational society.

On the other hand, Proctor's heroism has been contrasted with Abby's evil madness. Alter (1989) asserted that she represents the disorder created by the release of irrational energy and forces. Porter (1979) explains that she achieves awesome evil because of her firm resolution to lose everyone to her vicious purposes and her dangerous ability to pervert the sacred task of bearing witness. McGill, (1981) contends that Miller has captured one of the basic realities of Salem events: while characteristic of their times, they also

represented a loss of balance, a breakdown in the conventions which make communal life possible and human life bearable. Today, the Salem witch hunt as well as the McCarthy era are far back in time. Nevertheless, *The Crucible* still has some political significance for our time since, as Miller maintains, "the balance has yet to struck between order and freedom" (p. 22). In addition, as audiences, many of us cannot help but admire the heroic suffering and courage of the victims.

Pragmatics and the Dramatic Analysis of *The Crucible*

Pragmatics, the study of "contextual meaning" (Yule, 1996, p. 3), is a type of study that involves a consideration of how speakers arrange what they want to say in reference to who they are talking to, where, when and under what circumstances. Hence, it provides a valuable framework for the analysis of plays since language can be regarded as the mainspring of the action. As Bryan Magee (1999) maintains, a play consists primarily of people talking to one another, walking about the stage, picking up objects, putting them down again, sitting in chairs, getting out of them. If there is indeed dramatic physical action, such as a fist-fight or a shoot-out, it takes only a couple of minutes or perhaps only seconds. Magee adds that we may come out of a play feeling that it is full of action whereas in another play we may feel that there is "not enough action." Yet the characters in both cases will have been doing much the same things: walking around the stage, sitting about, talking to one another. It was J. L. Austin who early drew people's attention to a class of statements that he called "performative utterances," such as "I thank you", "I bet," "apologize." These statements cannot be said to be true or false because they do not describe an action but *perform* it. His work on the speech acts explains why some plays are regarded to be full of action, some others are not. Mike Short (1996) points out that in many respects, the conversation between characters in dramatic texts is similar to natural real-life conversation, hence lends itself readily to similar kinds of analysis. This actually means treating the dramatic text as a series of communicative acts to provide dramatic criticism with a way of explaining how meanings are arrived at. Mick Short (1989) further suggests that applying pragmatic and discourse analysis theories to dramatic texts may help to rescue dramatic criticism from the variability of performance analysis on the one hand and the inadequacy of traditional textual analysis on the other. T. A. van Dijk (1976), in his attempt to present the philosophical preliminaries of an integrated theory of literary studies, stresses the natural place of a pragmatic account of literature in such a theory. He assumes that in literary analysis the focus should not only be on the examination of the literary *text*, as in most literary studies, but also on the *process* of literary communication.

In *The Crucible*, the witch hunt does not get its original impetus from fact: it is based merely on the rumor of witchcraft. A whole community is at stake by means of gossip which soon turns into a hysteria. The power of the accusers over the victims is essentially "verbal": it first begins with Abigail's accusations of the women of Salem, then the hysteria spreads all over the town till it gets out of control. *The Crucible* then displays the destructive power of language since the conversational performances of the characters largely determine their fate and the fate of other characters. Pragmatic theories, particularly the speech act theory (SAT) as explored in the work of J. L. Austin and Searle help us to explain systematically how this destructive process works (Lowe, 1998). Moreover, the play is deeply rooted in a setting where institutional events and conventional acts with participants in public roles are enacted publicly via public procedures: all the victims of the witch hunt are prosecuted before the the sate court. Consequently, it forms a considerable potential for a literary pragmatic examination since many of Austin's (1962) original SAT examples were drawn from this category of conversational acts (Herman, 1995).

Austin and Speech Acts

A speech act in linguistics and the philosophy of language is an utterance that has a performative function in language and communication. In his work, *How To Do Things With Words* (1962, p. 6), Austin divides utterances into two major types: performatives and constatives. Performatives are utterances used to do things or perform acts. Here are some examples:

1. I now pronounce you man and wife.
2. I sentence you to 5 years in prison.
3. I promise to visit you next week.

Constatives, on the other hand, are utterances that can be verified as true or false. These are typically conveyed in the form of assertions or statements, e.g. "the River Nile is the longest in the world." Many performative utterances contain performative verbs. A performative verb is the one that specifies the action while performing it, e.g. I pronounce, I promise, I sentence, I order, I apologize, etc. If the sentence contains a performative verb making explicit the kind of act being performed, then we have an explicit performative. If the sentence does not contain a performative verb, then it is called an implicit performative, e. g. "Is there a Chinese restaurant in Wimpole street?"

Austin notices that a performative utterance needs to meet certain conditions to convey successfully the intended action. He calls these "felicity conditions." These are:

1. (a) There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect;

(b) the circumstances and persons must be appropriate as specified by the procedure. For instance, in order for the performative "The defendant, Tony Smith, is sentenced to ten years in the county prison," to be felicitous, it must be said in a legal court by the proper person according to the court procedures.

2. The procedure must be carried out correctly and completely, e.g. :

Priest: " Do you, Sandra Smith, take Alexander Brown as

Your lawfully wedded husband?"

Sandra : " I do."

Bride Sandra must utter the correct words for the marriage ceremony to be fulfilled.

3. (a) The participants must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions as

specified in the procedure. If one makes a promise, one must intend to act accordingly; (b) if consequent conduct is specified then pertinent participants must do so. Violation of condition 1 or 2 results in "a misfire," whereas "abuse" occurs when condition 3 is not observed. The above mentioned conditions must be met in order to achieve what Austin refers to as "happy performatives" (Austin, 1962, p. 15).

Austin further development of speech acts includes a distinction of three levels of speech act, namely "locutionary", "illocutionary" and "perlocutionary." Locutionary act is the actual utterance and its ostensible meaning (the phonetic, syntactic and semantic aspects of any significant utterance). Illocutionary act is the speaker's intention or the utterance as fulfilling an action the speaker has in mind, thus carrying "an illocutionary force" or the intended significance as a socially valid verbal action e.g. promising, ordering, warning, etc. For the illocutionary act to be performed "happily" depends on "uptake" i.e. the hearer must act according to the speaker's intentions. Perlocutionary act is the actual achievement of the speaker's utterance by the addressee. It represents a consequence of the illocution e.g. persuading, convincing, intimidating, enlightening or otherwise getting someone to do something. If the illocutionary act is carried out in line with the speaker's intention, then "a perlocutionary object" is fulfilled, if not then "a perlocutionary sequel" is produced. The object is the consequence intended by the speaker; the sequel is an unintended result springing from the hearer's misunderstanding of the speaker's meaning or his/her unwillingness to act in accordance with the speaker's intention (Austin, 1962, p. 118).

Searle's Approach

Searle's work on speech acts is often understood to develop Austin's conception. One of his significant contributions beyond Austin is his efforts to categorize speech acts. Searle (1975) classifies the illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressive and declarations. Assertives are acts that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. They can be judged as true or false, i.e. stating. Directives are attempts made by the speaker to get the hearer to do something, such as requesting, inviting, ordering, or threatening the hearer to some future course of action. Expressives, i.e. the illocutionary point of this category, is to express the psychological state specified in the propositional content such as congratulations, thanks, apologies, etc. Declarations are utterances which bring about changes in the state of affairs such as declaring war by the officials of a certain country against another country.

The Crucible and SAT

The study focuses on two scenes of the play which occur between the two leading characters, husband and wife, John and Elizabeth Proctor. These are examined in the light of SAT explored in the work of J. L. Austin and Searle to analyze the nature and development of the relationship between the two and the role this relationship plays in bringing about the catastrophic events of the play whose effects are not only confined to a limited number of individuals but to the society as a whole. The two scenes also reflect the agonizing inner voyage of John Proctor to find his lost honor.

The first scene occurs at the beginning of Act II in John Proctor's house. The second scene occurs in Act IV in John Proctor's prison cell near the end of the play before he chooses to be hanged with honor rather than live with shame. Both scenes include an act of request, to confess in the first instance or to approve of an act of confession in the second. In both scenes, the hearer declines the request. The choices of the characters in both scenes tell us something about their personal integrity and also about the terrible conflict going on within their minds and souls since confession of guilt means the loss of one's honor and property to avoid being hanged. An act of confession in the play is not just a matter of uttering some words: it is a way of saving one's life at the expense of losing one's reputation and property. The possibility of language to bring about a change of state is something examined by Austin in SAT.

The first scene opens Act II. John Proctor comes back home after working all day in the fields. Elizabeth, his wife, puts their children to bed and serves him dinner. As the couple discuss the farm and the meal, relations between them seems stressed and distant. Elizabeth is still unable to completely forgive John for his love affair with their former maid,

Abigail. The central speech act here is Elizabeth's request: "I think you must go to Salem, John... you must tell them it is a fraud" (p. 76). Through fulfilling this act by John, Elizabeth expects a major change in what she feels to be a dire situation i.e. Abigail's growing power and influence in Salem's society. Her pre-request utterances include implicit performatives to inform John of Salem's latest news since he has been busy working in the fields all day:

1. Their servant, Mary Warren has gone to Salem against his orders.
2. Mary, an ignorant 17-year-old maid, has become an official in the newly created court to prosecute witches. That's why she brags about her high position and acts like "a daughter of a prince" refusing to obey Elizabeth's orders to stay at home. It is clear that the social order in Salem is turned upside down due to the witch hunt.
4. Fourteen people have been imprisoned due the testimony of Abigail and the girls and will be hanged unless they confess to working with the devil.
5. Judges have come from Boston, headed by the deputy governor of Massachusetts.
6. Abigail has become extremely powerful and is respected by the people of Salem as though she was a saint.

By first conveying the disturbing news to John, Elizabeth attempts to open his eyes to the dangerous circumstances in Salem, hence to persuade him of the necessity of going there and denounce Abigail before it is too late. She aims at rendering the illocutionary force of her request more effective through a set of illuminating pre-request performatives. Indeed Elizabeth's relentless honesty is the most admirable quality of her character. She has taken upon herself to act as Proctor's conscience. She refuses to allow him to give up his responsibility to expose the girls' lies. His previous temptation of a young girl has already had dreadful consequences. In some way, Proctor has instigated the events that eventually led to the witch hunt. He has stimulated strong passions in Abigail and subjected her to hearsay from women whom she vindictively accused of witchcraft.

After conveying the alarming news of Salem to John, Elizabeth directly delivers her request (a directive speech act) : "I think you must go to Salem, John.... you must tell them it is a fraud" (p. 76). In the light of the previous disturbing news, it is obvious that Elizabeth realizes the evil desire of Abigail to take revenge upon her and upon the women of Salem. She also sees clearly that the girl is a natural killer, "a murderer" as she later states in the following scene (p. 104). Hence, her request strongly implies a warning to the hearer that if he does not go and tell the truth, the consequences will be dangerous to both of them. She again quietly prods: "God forbid you keep that from the court, John. I think they must be told"(p. 77). Proctor,

however, hesitates because, as he explains, without other witnesses, his word would be taken against Abigail's. Elizabeth is shocked to discover that he was alone with Abigail when she told him the truth. She quickly confronts him with her doubts and begins to interrogate him to know under which circumstances he was alone with the girl. Her interrogation in the form of several consecutive questions suggests that she believes he still loves the girl and he is trying to protect her. Proctor angrily interrupts her and cuts short her enquiry. He steadfastly maintains that his affair with Abigail is over and forgotten. In addition, he sharply blames Elizabeth because from the time Abigail left his house, he has been trying to please her but she is cold and unforgiving. He resents her endless doubts indicating that he will not stand her to judge him anymore. He warns her solemnly: "You will not judge me more, Elizabeth.... look to your own improvement before you... judge your husband anymore. I have forgot Abigail." Though he believes his folly has already been punished and repented for, yet she will never permit herself to forget it: " I have gone tiptoe in this house all seven month since...(Abigail) is gone. I have not moved from there to there without I think to please you, and still... I cannot speak but I am doubted, ... as though I come into a court into this house!" (p. 78). He even regrets that he ever confessed his affair with Abigail to her thinking that she would forgive him: " I should have roared you down when first you told me your suspicion. But I wilted, and, like a Christian, I confessed.... Some dream I had must have mistaken you for god that day. But you're not, you're not" (p. 79). Elizabeth's misgivings drives him to use his male authority to put an end to his long suffering and alienation in his house. He insistently delivers his demands in two clear directive speech acts: " Let you look sometimes for goodness in me, and judge me not" (p. 79). These directives, in addition to his earlier declarations, "I'll not have your suspicion any more," "You will not judge me more, Elizabeth" (p. 78), imply a serious threat to Elizabeth (maybe separation or divorce). Hence, they also serve as speech acts of threatening performed through the use of directives and declarations. As a result, Elizabeth softens and tries to justify her cold and unforgiving attitude before the end of the scene:

Elizabeth: I don't judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart
that judge you. I never thought you but but a goodman,
John --*with a smile*—only somewhat bewildered. (p. 79)

Her reaction reveals that she begins to feel anxious by his warnings and intimidation. Her anxiety represents the "perlocutionary" achievement of Proctor's threats. For the first time in six months, since she first discovered his liaison with Abigail, she sees that her marriage is about to collapse. She seems prepared to forgive him and forget about his folly even though it has taken much time to happen. Procter laughs bitterly: "Oh, Elizabeth, your

justice freezes beer!" (p. 79) reflect the agony and pain he has gone through during these months as a result of her cold and intolerant stance and her inability to truly forgive him.

The scene reveals a high potential for misunderstanding between the two which obviously refers to a breach in their relationship. To use Austin's terms, the discrepancy between the illocutionary force of their utterances and its intended and actual perlocutionary effects indicate the restless matrimonial life of the Proctors.

Some critics, like Popkin (1956) and Bonnet (1982), note that Elizabeth's interrogation of her husband in this scene lacks in mercy and understanding as the public justice of the wider context of Salem. Her heavy insistence on exploring and worrying over her husband's past crime soon relates her house to a courtroom. Elizabeth's obsession by which she appoints herself a judge and turns her house into a courtroom where she prosecutes her husband is, to use Austin's terms, "infelicitous" because she has no instituted authority to act that way. In addition, Proctor no longer endures her unforgiving, cold attitude, or rather he does not have "the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions" to accept his wife's role as a magistrate anymore. Consequently, Elizabeth's illocutionary behavior has hitherto contributed to cause "a misfire" and "an abuse" due to violation of Austin's felicity conditions 2 and 3. A great soul and an honest being she is, yet this has little chance if her suspicions towards her repentant husband cannot subordinate themselves to more considerate tolerance of a passing manly weakness. At this stage, Elizabeth cannot fully realize the spiritual agony of her husband to which Miller refers in the play's notes:

He is a sinner... not only against the moral fashion
of the time, but against his own vision of personal
conduct... Proctor, respected and even feared in Salem,
has come to regard himself a fraud (p. 38).

Throughout the play, Proctor struggles against his own weakness in order to achieve a view of himself that he can be satisfied with. This battle for personal integrity is lost many times before it is finally won at the play's end. He has already lost respect for himself as a result of his affair with Abigail. His sin is coupled with deception: in presenting himself as an upright citizen of Salem, he considers himself a fraud. In Salem, a person's name or reputation is everything. Although he does not feel that he deserves his good name, he does not wish to lose it. By resisting Elizabeth's warning-request, he is indeed unwilling to discredit Abigail, not because he still loves her, as Elizabeth quickly misinterprets, but because he believes that by condemning her, he would risk exposing himself as a lecher and ruin his good name.

Proctor at this stage believes that he can go on with life away from what is going on in Salem. By refusing to risk his reputation, he allows Abigail's power to enhance till she soon accuses his wife of witchcraft, and the latter is arrested and tried before the court. Despite his attempts to retreat from society, the insanity that has engulfed Salem soon turns his private world upside down.

Thus the illocutionary force of Elizabeth through which she intends to urge Proctor to tell the truth fails because of his unwillingness to involve himself in the trials. The result is a perlocutionary sequel i.e. Proctor's refusal to go to Salem to discredit Abigail before the court. Instead, he promises to "think on it," while Abigail's power over the town grows stronger. As audiences, we strongly feel that his promise (a commissive speech act) is more likely to be a device to evade further argument with Elizabeth; even if he did think on the matter, we would not expect much of positive results. He does not really intend to commit himself to a future course of action with 14 people already in prison threatened to hang if they deny the accusations or else be excommunicated if they confess to mere lies. Hence he violates the felicity condition 3 and his "infelicitous" promise, without having the requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions to fulfill, results in an "abuse" of the procedure of promise.

Another pattern of request and refusal occurs in the second scene between Elizabeth and John in Act IV near the end of the play. However, the scene reveals a favorable progress in their relationship after all the hardships they have gone through since Elizabeth's arrest at the end of Act II. When she was arrested at the end of act II, Proctor swears to "fall like an ocean on that court" (p. 106). Nevertheless, he continues to delay jeopardizing his reputation. He first attempts through a variety of legal arguments to free his wife. He also forces their maid, Mary Warren, to admit before the court that the girls have been pretending. When Abigail outwits him in the court, he has no choice but to denounce her as a harlot and confess being a lecher. At last, he realizes that he cannot go on living isolated from the social turmoil of his town and, by hiding the truth, he has committed a great wrong. Ironically, when Deputy Governor Danforth questions Elizabeth to confirm Proctor's claim against Abigail, her concern for her husband's name causes her to deny that her husband is a lecher. Living in the puritanical environment of Salem and sharing its values, even "this model of truthfulness" values her husband's good name more than uttering truth (Popkin, 1964, p. 144). Her only lie proves to be her ruin, and far from protecting her husband it leads to his accusation and arrest as a devil's agent.

The second scene occurs in act IV, three months after Proctor's arrest on the night before he is to be hanged. He and his wife have been apart during this period and have never seen each other since. Elizabeth's life, as

Danforth declares, has been spared till she gives birth to her baby. She has been previously urged by deputy governor Danforth and Reverend Hale to prevail upon her husband to confess to a lie to save his life. The court officials are desperate for his confession. Rebellion is spreading around. To keep hold of its power, the court needs one of the convicted prisoners to confess thus proves to the seditious public the guilt of the victims. Elizabeth agrees to speak with her husband but does not promise to ask for his confession.

Left alone for sometime in Proctor's cell, they clasp hands and begin with difficulty to speak. He asks about the expected baby and about the children. She tells him that their sons are safe. He asks about their friends, Giles Corey, Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey. She tells him that Giles had been tortured to death and refused to confess. She adds that although many have confessed, Rebecca Nurse and Martha Corey have held firm. Proctor reveals that so far he has refused to confess out of stubborn pride. Despite torture, he has had no desire "to give a lie to dogs" (p. 173) Now he is planning to save his life. In his heart, however, he knows that it is a cowardly and dishonest act. But because he trusts Elizabeth's honest judgment, he desperately wants her to approve of his action as if to provide him with a moral pretext for dishonesty and cowardice. Unlike Elizabeth in the previous scene, he does not use pre-request performatives to emotionally persuade her to accept his request and approve of his future action. It is evident that he has meditated a lot over his decision. The news that his close friends have heroically refused to confess, instead of elevating his morale, causes him to feel frustrated. He indicates that it is a pretense and as a sinner, he is not worthy of a martyr death. He right away delivers his request using two consecutive questions: "What say you? If I give them that?" "What would you have me do?" (p. 173) This time Elizabeth interprets her husband's intention correctly: "As you will, I would have it. *Slight pause*; I want you living, John" (p. 173). She knows the essential goodness of his character. She also recognizes the conflict going on within his mind and soul. Though they have been separated physically, the suffering they both have experienced brings about their emotional and spiritual rapprochement. But Proctor is not yet quite true to himself.

Elizabeth refuses to judge her husband's future action using a declarative speech act reflecting her upright and honest nature, " I can't judge you, John" (p. 172). Rather she simply states her love and confirms her faith in her husband's goodness. She urges him to find goodness in himself because it is his soul he is risking, not hers. Ironically enough, Elizabeth in the previous scene desires her husband to act responsibly and confess to the truth to save his family and the whole society, but he refuses. In this scene, proctor wants to confess to a lie to save himself, but his wife refuses to

encourage him. As in the previous scene, Elizabeth's refusal results in a perlocutionary sequel. The rational justifications he utters afterwards do not convince her to change her state of mind: "My honesty is broke Elizabeth; I am no good man;" or refusing to confess to a lie is "a vanity that will not blind God, nor keep my children out of the wind" (p. 173). Earlier in their previous argument in Act II, Proctor ironically rejects Elizabeth's judgment of his actions to "look to your own improvement before you go to judge your husband" (p. 78). Instead of developing strong suspicions toward her husband, she should have realized the role she played in driving him to Abigail's arms. Now Elizabeth recalls those words. While refraining from supporting her husband's intentions to confess by refusing to judge his actions, she asks his forgiveness for her own sin of coldness and suspicion: "It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery" (p. 174). Evidently her character undergoes a remarkable change. During her stay in prison, she has plenty of time to seek out her soul. Now she delivers her own confessions disclosing how her own weakness, coldness and lack of confidence drove her husband into Abigail's arms. She has indeed looked to her improvement, and now she reveals her sorrow using expressives like: "I never knew how I should say my love," and "it was a cold house I kept!" (p. 174)

Elizabeth's unbending truthfulness tortures Proctor and makes him realize his lack of moral courage. He reconsiders his grave decision for a while and agonizingly expresses his weakness in a series of questions reflecting his moral confusion: "Then who will judge me? ... God in heaven, what is John Proctor, what is John Proctor ? " (p. 175) Breaking free from all pretense and rationalization, he forces himself to face the truth using a commissive performative this time echoing his determination to confess to lies despite his wife's disapproval: "Good then—it is evil, and I do it" (p. 176). The scene ends with the entrance of the court officials.

Although Proctor thinks that he has surrendered to evil, yet there are red lines which he will not dare to cross. The example of Elizabeth is not fully lost in him and his commitment to his friends proves greater than he believes to be. He refuses to name anyone or to bear witness against Rebecca, Martha and others: " I like not spoil their names" (p. 179). He then tries to avoid signing his confession, arguing that his signature is not needed with so many witnesses around. Under Danforth's orders, he reluctantly signs, then snatches the paper away. He refuses to hand over his signed confession so as not to enable the court to use it for its wicked purposes i.e. to incriminate those respectable innocent people, and to strengthen its corrupt hold over the town: "I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence" (p. 181). He also knows that the signed confession will destroy his good name and shame his children. He shouts in agony at Deputy Governor Danforth who insists to have his signed

confession: "Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another life!... How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul, leave me my name" (p. 182).

Proctor's dilemma lies in the fact that he has separated his soul from his name, his actions from his moral values. His soul was first lost the moment he seduced Abigail. As the witch hunt progresses, he confronts his weaknesses one by one and finds new strengths within himself. He learns that no one can cut off himself from the crucial events of his time. He also comes to understand that no middle ground with truth is possible as Danforth's threatening performative tells him: "You will give me your honest confession in my hand, or I cannot keep you from the rope" (p. 182). At last Proctor makes his choice and gloriously tears up his confession. He associates himself totally with the ideals of sincerity and truthfulness, with faithfulness to his friends and and to the devastation of the corrupt authority of Salem's court. By refusing to reject these ideals, he regains his honor that he first lost with the seduction of Abigail. At last he discovers his true self and finds a worthy answer to the question that has stimulated and distressed him from the beginning: "What is John Proctor?" (p. 175) He can finally declare to Danforth, Paris and other court officials: "You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. Not enough to weave a banner with, but white enough to keep it from such dogs" (p. 183). Realizing at the end that, to save his dignity and restore his self-esteem, his name must embody his soul, consequently he chooses a heroic death over a dishonorable life. Proctor's spiritual odyssey is highly personal but it is also social since he ultimately comes to an elevated self-awareness through which he prefers to protect his honor rather than live in a society where deceit and pretense are "institutionalized" (Bonnet, 1983, p. 35). His last words to the weeping Elizabeth form a request which echoes his victory over the dogs: "Give them no tears! Tears pleasure them ! Show honor now, show a stony heart and sink them with it !" (p. 183)

As Proctor and Rebecca are led to the gibbet, Reverend Hale and Reverend Paris, members of the court, beg Elizabeth to persuade her husband to change his mind. Hale argues that Proctor is throwing his life away out of futile pride. He asks Elizabeth to "Go to him, take his shame away" (p. 184). But Elizabeth knows better: Proctor's sacrifice is not his shame but his honor. Out of love for her husband, she lets him die with his newly-found "goodness." With a cry and near collapse she exclaims: "He has his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!" (p. 183)

Conclusion

Applying SAT as proposed by Austin and Searle to Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* reveals that Proctor and Elizabeth have different and

incompatible conversational goals. It is not always possible for them to achieve "uptake." However, the theory also demonstrates a considerably positive development in their relationship throughout the two scenes in which they are alone on the stage. The first scene establishes the troubled marital life of the Proctors. Elizabeth wants Proctor to confess to the court that there was no practice of witchcraft and the girls were just pretending. But her constant prosecution of her husband and her anxiety and suspicions over his actions along with Proctor's reluctance to do as she wishes renders her request futile. The second scene reveals certain admirable changes in the character of Elizabeth. Suffering and imprisonment give her a chance to search her soul and to face her past weaknesses. She displays greater understanding and open-mindedness in the second encounter with her husband. She expresses her deep love for her husband and asks him to forgive her. Proctor plans to confess to a lie to save his life and he desperately seems in need of a moral justification for his action through his wife's approval. But Elizabeth's relentless honesty and her faith in Proctor's essential goodness prevent her from supporting his request. However, Elizabeth's model of honesty, dignity and courage soon inspires Proctor to face his moral confusion and re-instate his lost honor. Through his painful efforts to defeat the faults in his character, he discovers his potential for greatness and the essence of goodness within himself. Realizing that real honor can only be achieved through total honesty and integrity, he finally chooses to meet a heroic death rather than lead a disgraceful life.

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